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NHTSA-2001-10773-22
Ford Motor Company

Automotive Safety Office
Environmental and Safety Engineering

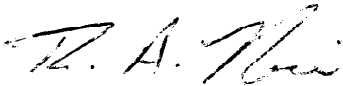
January 7, 2002

Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D.
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Dr. Runge:

A copy of the attached letter was delivered to Ken Weinstein on December 12, 2001. However, we are not sure if it was received by the docket. Please accept the attached letter as Ford's submission to the docket.

Sincerely,



R.A. Nevi
Manager
Production Vehicle Safety & Compliance

Attachment



Ford Motor Company

James P. Vondale, Director
Automotive Safety Office
Environmental & Safety Engineering

December 10, 2001

Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D.
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Reporting of Information About Foreign Safety Recalls and
Campaigns Related to Potential Defects; Notice of Proposed
Rulemaking (66 Fed. Reg. 51907; October 11, 2001); Docket No.
NHTSA-2001-10773, Notice 1

Dear Dr. Runge:

Ford Motor Company, a domestic manufacturer and importer of motor vehicles with offices at One American Road, Dearborn, Michigan 48126-2798 submits the following comments to the referenced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). The NPRM proposes new rules to implement the foreign safety recall and other safety campaign reporting requirements of Section 3(a) of the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation ("TREAD") Act.

Ford Motor Company participated in the preparation of the comments of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (Alliance) and those comments are incorporated herein by reference. This response covers all brands encompassed by the Ford Motor Company trustmark (Ford, Lincoln, Mercury, Mazda, Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover, Aston Martin and TH!NK.)

Ford Motor Company wishes to reinforce points made in the Alliance comments regarding the need for clear, objective definitions of the information to be provided under Section 3(a) of the TREAD Act, so that manufacturers will know with reasonable certainty what is required of them, particularly as to the definitions of a "substantially similar" vehicle and "other safety campaign[s]."

Beginning in October 2000, Ford began reporting to the Agency field service actions undertaken in countries outside the United States. The scope of Ford Motor Company's reporting has been broad. It has not been limited to actions involving vehicles that are "identical or substantially similar" to vehicles sold in the United States. For example, service actions involving Transit vans and the Ikon (a vehicle produced in India and sold in India and certain



December 10, 2001

other markets, but not the United States) have been among those reported. Similarly, Ford Motor Company has provided the Agency with reports of warranty extensions and other field service actions undertaken in foreign countries in the interest of customer satisfaction that did not involve safety concerns. Ford Motor Company has chosen to over-report, in part, because of the absence of clear definitions. We do not believe that such over-reporting provides the Agency with any information that might "in a meaningful manner...assist in the identification of defects related to motor vehicle safety" in the United States. We believe that both the Agency and Ford Motor Company will benefit from clear and objective definitions that focus on matters of potential safety concern involving vehicles sold in this country. We urge the Agency to carefully consider the recommendations contained in the Alliance comments.

Based on the experience we have gained in the preparation of reports of foreign service actions, we also ask the Agency to carefully consider the Alliance comments concerning the meaning of the statutory requirement to report within five days. While some manufacturers may have a single, centralized process for considering and approving service actions globally, Ford Motor Company does not. Within the Ford brand alone, different regional processes exist in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region encompassing vehicles produced in those regions. Additionally, other Ford Motor Company brands (e.g., Jaguar, Land Rover, Volvo, etc.) have their own processes. Geographic distance, lack of business hour overlap, language and cultural differences, and different legal systems and definitions add further layers of complexity that must be negotiated in order to assemble and submit the required information. In many cases, five days simply will not be enough time to completely accomplish the task as proposed in the NPRM. To satisfy the statutory notification requirement, manufacturers will be forced to file initial "reports" that include little substantive information, followed later by a supplemental report containing additional, more detailed, information. This need for multiple reports will result in a substantial additional administrative burden for both the Agency and manufacturers. Ford Motor Company urges the Agency to carefully consider these practical difficulties before issuing a final rule.

Sincerely,



James P. Vondale

cc: Mr. Kenneth N. Weinstein
Associate Administrator for
Safety Assurance